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## Our Man in Pullach

**The Service: The Memoirs of General Reinhard Gehlen** translated by David Irving. World, 400 pp., \$10.00

**The General Was a Spy** by Heinz Höhne and Hermann Zolling, translated by Richard Barry. Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 347 pp., \$10.00

**Gehlen, Spy of the Century** by E. H. Cookridge. Random House, 402 pp., \$10.00

### Neal Ascherson

When the Third Reich fell, the Allies were able to make use of a lot of Nazi junk. Like the telex machines in the Reuters office in Berlin, which up to a year or two ago still preserved a special key with the double lightning-flash of the SS, much of Hitler's furniture served the conquerors' purposes until equipment built for new requirements could be introduced. General Gehlen was such a piece of junk. Unfortunately, he stayed in service for another twenty-three years. Long after his espionage machinery had become obsolete and unreliable, the Gehlen keys continued to tap out the only message they knew: Bolshevik Russia is the merciless arch-enemy of human civilization, only a right-wing authoritarian state can resist the Red Terror, anyone who doubts either of the above propositions is a "Staatsfeind."

Reinhard Gehlen, a small and reticent man with jug ears, was the head of *Fremde Heere Ost* (Foreign Armies East), the German military intelligence service on the eastern front during World War II. After the war, he sold himself, his men, and his files to the Americans on the condition that he be allowed to operate autonomously. In 1955 the "Gehlen Organization" was transferred to the Federal Republic under the name of "Bundesnachrichtendienst" (BND). From then until he was pushed into retirement in 1968, after a long series of scandals and official complaints, Gehlen ran a West German espionage service with branches and agents all over the world.

That is the framework. Within it lies a Bosch landscape of swarming, terrifying, terrified figures: an armed parachutist fleeing from Soviet patrols in Lithuania, a double traitor feasting on smuggled lobsters, SS veterans training subversion squads to enter socialist Hungary, and a swan carrying packets

of information under its wings across a Berlin lake. A woman opens her legs to Russian officers in Vienna; another is led to the guillotine in East Germany for high treason. Everywhere, men looking over their shoulders are touting folders of secrets for dog-eared wads of money. All these were Gehlen's creatures. Somehow, looking back on this landscape in his memoirs, he can say: "My own view was that in the long run only he who fights with a spotless shield will triumph."

Such is Gehlen's view of himself. His memoirs were sold in advance for a gigantic sum to the right-wing Springer newspaper chain for serialization, but proved to be so eccentric, and indeed so dull, that the Springer journalists were obliged to pad them out with apologetic notes. Their most startling page claimed that Bormann was a Soviet spy and escaped to the Russians after the fall of Berlin, a claim for which Gehlen advances no real evidence whatever. Gehlen, to the anguish of the Springer press, denies or ignores most of the really sensational anecdotes about his postwar activities. Instead, he delivers interminable, whining discourses about the internal bureaucracy of the BND in its headquarters at Pullach, near Munich, and about its budget grievances.

But Gehlen's memoirs, though utterly unreliable and at times deliberately misleading, retain some historical interest. In the first place, they tell us something about Gehlen's world outlook. Secondly, they confirm beyond doubt the disgraceful unconstitutional campaign waged by Gehlen and his men against the Social Democrats and their "Ostpolitik," the patient effort to dismantle the cold war ramparts of legal fiction and paranoia which separated West Germany from Eastern Europe.

Gehlen's own politics, as revealed in this book, remain those of a moderate Nazi. There is, for instance, the characteristic blindness to the torments and feelings of any people other than the Germans. Consider this passage, in which Gehlen is describing the life of the Soviet population under Nazi occupation:

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